

UPDATE

2004 Update on Cholesterol Guidelines

A 2004 update to the National Cholesterol Education Program's (NCEP) clinical practice guidelines on cholesterol management advises physicians to consider new, more intensive treatment options for people at high and moderately high risk for a heart attack. These options include setting lower treatment goals for LDL ("bad") cholesterol and initiating cholesterol-lowering drug therapy at lower LDL thresholds.

Recommendations:

1. High and Very High Risk Patients

- High risk patients are to maintain an LDL level of less than 100 mg/dL.
- Very high-risk patients whose LDL levels are already below 100 mg/dL, should discuss the option to use drug therapy to reach the less than 70 mg/dL goal with their physician.
- High-risk patients are those who have coronary heart disease or disease of the blood vessels to the brain or extremities, diabetes, or multiple (2 or more) risk factors (e.g. smoking, hypertension) that give them a greater than 20 percent chance of having a heart attack within 10 years.
- Very high-risk patients are those who have cardiovascular disease together with either multiple risk factors (especially diabetes), severe and poorly controlled risk factors or metabolic syndrome.

2. Moderately High-Risk

- Moderately high-risk patients should aim for an LDL level under 130 mg/dL.
- Therapeutic option to set a lower LDL goal under 100 mg/dL and to use drug therapy at LDL levels of 100 – 129 mg/dL to reach this lower goal should be discussed with your physician.
- Moderately high-risk patients are those who have multiple (2 or more) risk factors for coronary heart disease together with a 10 to 20 percent risk of having a heart attack within 10 years.
- High-risk or moderately high-risk patients are advised that the intensity of LDL lowering drug therapy may be sufficient to achieve at least a 30 to 40 percent reduction in LDL levels.

3. Lower/Moderate Risk

- The NCEP update did not revise recommendations for lower risk persons: those with moderate risk (2 or more risk factors plus an under 10 percent risk of a heart attack in 10 years) or those with 0 to 1 risk factor.

Please visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov to read the full report and to assess your risk of having a heart attack.

